SOCS2400 - Applied Social Research

Course Outline

Course Co-ordinator: Dr Ann Taylor
Room: W353
Ph: 02 4952 1025
Fax: 02 4921 6902
Email: Ann.Taylor@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Tuesday 1-2, Thursday 12-1 Other times by appointment.

Lecturer: Paul Stolk
Room: GP2-28
Ph: 02 4921 5694
Email: Paul.Stolk@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours to be advised.

Semester: Semester 2 - 2007
Unit Weighting: 10
Teaching Methods: Lecture, Workshop, Computer Lab

Brief Course Description
This course is a prescribed course for students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Science and is also open to students who have completed at least 20 units of Social Science courses at 1000 level. It particularly provides grounding in social science methods as preparation for SOCS3200 Applied Social Research and for other 2000 and 3000 level social science courses.

In this course students develop a comprehensive understanding of social science methods for the design of social inquiry, the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and the reporting of results.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2007

CTS Download Date: 8th June 2007
Students develop an understanding of the uses, strengths and limitations of various methods, ethical issues in conducting social inquiry, debates over epistemology, and skills in design, report writing, and interpretation of numerical and qualitative data. The computer workshops will include an introduction to appropriate software packages such as: Excel, and SPSS. The course does not require previous statistical knowledge.

Contact Hours
Computer Lab for 2 Hours per Week for 7 Weeks
Workshop for 2 Hours per Week for 6 Weeks
Lecture for 1 Hour per Week for the Full Term


Course Objectives
On successful completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of a range of social science methods, related ethical issues, and the relationship between social science methods and social theory.
2. Critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of various social science methods and select appropriate methods to answer and resolve social science questions and problems.
3. Effectively communicate results in written and oral form.

Course Content
This course is a prescribed course for students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Science and is also open to all students as an elective. It particularly provides grounding in social science methods as preparation for SOCS3200 Applied Social Research and for other 2000 and 300 level social science courses.

In this course students develop a comprehensive understanding of social science methods for the design of social inquiry, the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and the reporting of results. Topics will include consideration of the relationship between knowledge and social science methodology, the use and misuse of social science techniques, the use of evidence to substantiate conclusions, and the ethics of social inquiry. In relation to quantitative research, the course will develop competencies in the collection and processing of numerical data, visualisation and presentation techniques, questionnaire design and processing, descriptive and inferential statistics, using a range of computing packages which may include Excel and SPSS. In relation to qualitative research the course will develop competencies in semi-structured interviews, participant observation, ethnography and unobtrusive approaches. Through this students will develop an understanding of the strengths and limitations of various methods, ethical issues in conducting research, debates over epistemology and interpretation, skills in social inquiry design, report writing, and interpretation of numerical and qualitative data.

Assessment Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Items</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>2000 words, 30%, due week 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination: Formal</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: (please specify)</td>
<td>Workshop Exercises; 4 x 500 words = 2000 words; 40%; due throughout semester.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumed Knowledge
20 units of approved Social Science 1000 level courses.

Please check timetable carefully - there have been changes since last year. You will be attending a lecture + doing EITHER a workshop OR a computer session each week. Callaghan students need to enroll in a workshop and a lab at the same time each week. Ourimbah students will attend the same workshop but need to enroll in one of two computer labs at a different time.
**Callaghan Campus Timetable - Lecture + choose 1 workshop/computer lab time.**

**SOCS2400**

**APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH**

Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer Lab</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>15:00 - 17:00</th>
<th>[HA159A] Wks 2-7 and 12 only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>11:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>[HA159A] Wks 2-7 and 12 only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>[HA159A] Wks 2-7 and 12 only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>and Lecture</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>9:00 - 10:00</th>
<th>[SRLT1]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>11:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>[W308] Wks 1, 8-11 and 13 only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>[W202] Wks 1, 8-11 and 13 only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>[W238] Wks 1, 8-11 and 13 only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ourimbah Timetable Lecture + workshop for everyone + choose 1 computer lab.**

**SOCS2400**

**APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH**

Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer Lab</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>14:00 - 16:00</th>
<th>[O_IT05] Wks 2-10 only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>18:00 - 20:00</td>
<td>[O_IT01] Wks 2-10 only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>and Lecture</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>11:00 - 12:00</th>
<th>[O_CS2.18]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and Workshop</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>12:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>[O_CN2:1.11] Wk 1 only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Workshop</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>12:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>[O_CS2.18] Wks 11-14 only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plagiarism**

University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one's own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another's ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -

The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

· Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
· Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
· Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

Written Assessment Items

Students are be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or

2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

· Requests for Special Consideration must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.

· Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

· Requests for Rescheduling Exams must be received in the Student Hub no later than ten working days prior the first date of the examination period

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. Students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer in the first instance.

Changing your Enrolment

The last dates to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Date) for semester 2 courses is 31 August 2007

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. Any
withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs.

To change your enrolment online, please refer to

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/changingenrolment.html

Faculty Information

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students on campus.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

Callaghan campus
• Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
• Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

City Precinct
• City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an Information Common for the City Precinct

Ourimbah campus
• Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

Faculty websites
Faculty of Education and Arts
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/

Contact details
Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie
Phone: 02 4921 5000
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

Ourimbah
Phone: 02 4348 4030
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students
Resolution Precinct
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Deputy Dean of Students (Ourimbah)
Phone: 02 4348 4123
Fax: 02 4348 4145
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au
Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:  

**Alteration of this Course Outline**

No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

**Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards**  

**Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards**  

**Web Address for Rules Governing Professional Doctorate Awards**  

**STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS**

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.

If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at: [www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability)

**Online Tutorial Registration:**

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - [http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm](http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm)

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

**Studentmail and Blackboard:** Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au)

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

**Further Information**

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au)

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
### SOCS 2400 Course content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lectures</th>
<th>Workshop topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ann Taylor</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction: Research and sociology</td>
<td>Course organisation and expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paul Stolk</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 2: Understanding Quantitative Research | Textbook Chapter 3  
Lab – Getting familiar with SPSS |
| Week 3: Using SPSS for Windows | Textbook Chapter 12  
Lab – Creating variables and entering data |
| Week 4: Sampling | Textbook Chapter 4  
Lab – Analysing data |
| Week 5: Data Collection Methods I: Structured Interviews | Textbook Chapter 5  
Lab – Analysing data (cont.) |
| Week 6: Data Collection Methods II: Questionnaires | Textbook Chapters 6 and 7  
Lab – Data presentation |
| Week 7: Data Analysis and Reporting | Textbook Chapter 11  
Lab – Putting it all together |
| **Ann Taylor** | |  
| Week 8. The nature of qualitative research – strengths and limitations. Ethical issues | Textbook chapter 13 and 25  
Journal review – bring examples of qualitative research  
Skill development: research questions and indicators |
| Week 9 Interviews and focus groups | Chapter 15 (brief look at Chapter 160  
Journal review – find examples of unstructured interviews and focus group research  
Developing an unstructured interview schedule relevant to your topic. Ethical issues. |
| Week 10 Language and document analysis | Chapters 17 and 18  
Journal review: this week look for official reports and media relevant for your topic  
Skill development: discourse and thematic analysis. |
| Week 11 Ethnography and combined methods | Chapters 14 and 21/22  
Journal review: look for participant observation and ethnographic reports.  
How to scale up research designs and write research briefs |
| Week 12 Qualitative data analysis | Chapters 19 and 20  
No journal articles today – bring transcripts on disc for computer lab  
Analysing qualitative data - lab |
| Week 13 Doing research projects – directions for the future | Chapters 24 and 26  
Discussion of progress on written assignment.  
Skill development: Writing up interviews and research reports |
Qualitative Workshop Instructions

Qualitative research workshops will consist of three elements:

1. **Review textbook reading for that week.** Textbook content will be covered in the lecture. We will discuss the questions for that chapter in the first part of the tutorial to check that everyone has understood the issues.

2. **Journal article discussion.** Please bring one or more journal articles which report on qualitative research – be prepared to discuss the methods which have been used and the way in which the method is related to the theory and content of the paper. You need not print out the whole paper, just the abstract and the description of the methods.

3. **Skill development** – we will practice interviewing and discuss progress on our projects.

**Assessment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Exercises</th>
<th>4 x 500 words = 2000 words; 40%; due throughout semester.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>2000 words, 30%, due week 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination: Formal</td>
<td>30%.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment item 1. Workshop exercises – submission of work done in computer labs.

Assessment item 2. Written report on analysis of qualitative data based on interview data which has been workshopped in tutorials and some form of published text, such as a government report, court case or media coverage.

Assessment item 3. Exam – short answer questions on lecture material. Two exercises in interpreting data – one quantitative and one qualitative. One short essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Fail (FF)</th>
<th>Pass (P)</th>
<th>Credit (C)</th>
<th>Distinction (D)</th>
<th>High Distinction (HD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Week beginning</th>
<th>SOCS 2400 2007 Lecture Topic &amp; Assessment at a Glance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16th July</td>
<td>Introduction Ann Taylor: Research and sociology: quantitative and qualitative methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23rd July</td>
<td>Understanding Quantitative Research: Paul Stolk Computer workshop exercises and their due dates will be explained at this lecture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30th July</td>
<td>Using SPSS for Windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6th August</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13th August</td>
<td>Data Collection Methods I: Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>20th August</td>
<td>Data Collection Methods II: Questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27th August</td>
<td>Data Analysis and Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3rd September</td>
<td>The nature of qualitative research - strengths and limitations. Ethical issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10th September</td>
<td>Interviews and focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>17th September</td>
<td>Language and document analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>24th September</td>
<td>Ethnography and combined methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mid-Semester Recess: 2nd October to 12th October</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>15th October</td>
<td>Qualitative data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>22nd October</td>
<td>Doing research projects - directions for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>29th October</td>
<td>No lecture. Qualitative research assignment due 5pm Friday 2nd October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examination period:** Monday 5th November to Friday 23rd November

Formal examination will be scheduled in this period.